Status of the Purdue Language and Cultural Exchange (PLaCE)

The two-course sequence for English for Academic Purposes (GS 100 and 101) has been funded for AY 2017-18. The sequence will be required for all (approximately 500) incoming undergraduate international students whose TOEFL total scores (or a comparable admissions language proficiency score) are less than 100. On July 1, 2016, PLaCE and the OEPP will move to the College of Liberal Arts. Dean Reingold will seek ways to secure continued funding.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE: International students benefit from language and cultural support as they transition to Purdue. PLaCE offers two 3-credit courses, GS 100 and 101: English Language and American Culture for International Students, I & II. Two additional integral components, the PLaCE Language Partner Program (LPP) and the Assessment of College English - International (ACE-In), are unique to the Purdue educational context. The two courses are designed to develop international students’ (1) second-language skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, (2) confidence to more fully participate in university life, and (3) cross-cultural competence. Requiring GS 100 and 101 as prerequisites for ENGL 106/106i and COM 114 results in a 4-semester language support sequence, comparable to our peer institutions.

As an ancillary component of GS 100 and 101 classes, the LPP provides students from diverse backgrounds a structured way to engage in cultural integration activities (international students are paired with domestic students). To date, more than 1,000 students (approximately 40% international and 60% domestic) have participated in the LPP, and student feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

ACE-In is a locally developed, internet-based, semi-direct English language proficiency test. The test contains three modules, and all items within each module are timed to evaluate examinees’ real-time abilities to comprehend, speak, and write English. The information provided by the ACE-In is used to: (1) reliably identify English language learning needs of incoming international students, (2) establish sub-skill profiles, (3) provide a reliable and valid starting point to appropriate instructional interventions, (4) examine language development over time (pre-, post-testing), and (5) contribute to language program evaluation.

PLaCE SUCCESS TO DATE:

- Statistically significant gains in student oral reading fluency and in free-response speaking fluency.
  - The average pre-test oral reading rate of 106 words per minute increases to a post-test 126 words per minute (compared to first-language adult speakers of English whose rates range from 150-200 wpm.)
  - The free-response speaking rate of 121 wpm increased to 135 wpm (as compared 150-200 wpm.)
- A development and re-write of our current tests into a single system in partnership with the Oral English Proficiency Program provides the opportunity to leverage faculty expertise and commercialize the tests.
- GS 100 is now part of the University core curriculum.
- Program effectiveness satisfies the University Senate Resolution 14-10.

BENEFITS

- PLaCE helps ensure that we graduate academically, culturally, and linguistically competent international students, more capable of competing for employment opportunities or graduate school.
- International students with improved English language skills will be more able and willing to communicate with their domestic peers, hence increasing meaningful interaction among students.
- Faculty who have transformed their courses as part of IMPACT are especially concerned with the English language skills of international students. As their redesigned courses anticipate significant group work and interpersonal interaction, English conversational skills are increasingly important to the student-engaged classroom. Thus, PLaCE supports the work of IMPACT in a vital and necessary way.
• This program will provide a strong English language and cultural support structure to ensure that Purdue remains a desired US destination for international students. This program will differentiate Purdue from many of our peers.